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ADDRESSES

AT THE

INAUGURATION

OF

REV. THOMAS H. SKINNER, D. D.,

AS

CYRUS H. McCORMICK PROFESSOR OF DIDACTIC AND POLEMIC THEOLOGY,

AND OF

REV. WILLIS G. CRAIG, D. D.,

AS

PROFESSOR OF BIBLICAL AND ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY,

IN THE

Presbyterian Theological Seminary of the Northwest,

CHICAGO, ILL.

IVERED IN THE FOURTH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, APRIL 5, 1883.

CHICAGO:
H. W. McCUNE, PRINTER, 170 MADISON STREET.
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Inauguration Exercises.

At a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary of the Northwest, June 14, 1881, Rev. Thomas H. Skinner, D.D., then pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church of Cincinnati, Ohio, was elected Cyrus H. McCormick Professor of Didactic and Polemic Theology. He was confirmed by the following General Assembly, and entered upon the duties of his chair in the Autumn of 1881.

At the Annual Meeting of the Board, April 6, 1882, Rev. Willis G. Craig, D.D., then pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, of Keokuk, Iowa, was elected Professor of Biblical and Ecclesiastical History. He was confirmed by the General Assembly in May of the same year, and entered upon the duties of the Professorship in the following September.

Their inauguration took place, by appointment of the Board, on Thursday, April 5, 1883, at 8 o'clock P. M., in the Fourth Presbyterian Church of Chicago. The Order of Exercises on the occasion was as follows:

Prayer, by Rev. W. W. Harsha, D.D.

Reading of the Scriptures, by Rev. Arthur T. Pierson, D.D.

Hymn.

The Introductory Address, by Rev. Samuel J. Niccolls, D.D., President of the Board.

Inaugural Address, by Professor Skinner.

Inaugural Address, by Professor Craig.

Prayer, by Rev. Herrick Johnson, D.D., LL.D.

The three Addresses were furnished for publication at the request of the Board of Directors.

Introductory Address.

BY

REV. SAMUEL J. NICCOLLS, D.D.,

(OF ST. LOUIS, MO.)

PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE SEMINARY.

Christian Brethren and Friends of the Theological Seminary of the Northwest:

We have assembled, this evening, to ratify and establish in a public and solemn manner, an official relation between certain men and a certain work. That work is, in general, the training of candidates for the Gospel Ministry. All will agree that it is one of supreme importance. The office of the Christian Ministry, as set forth in the Word of God, is one of such high duties, and solemn responsibilities, that no one should presume to enter it without due preparation. Its nature and functions are such as to claim, not only the best spiritual gifts, but also the ripest scholarship, and the best intellectual training that can be obtained, for its service. It is absurd to suppose that in this case the usual law is reversed, and that the higher and more responsible the calling, the less is the need of training for it. Only ignorance or fanaticism decries scholarship and careful study, in connection with a proper preparation for the work of the ministry. But while there is a general agreement on all sides, as to the necessity for a thorough training for this work, it is still a question with many, how it can best be obtained. That branch of the church with which we are associated replies, "There must be special schools for this purpose." In favor of this method, we have the testimony of experience. The

charter for Theological schools is written in the history of the church, under both dispensations. We know of their existence, and their wonderful influence in Israel, from the days of the prophets Samuel and Elisha, on down to the times of the Rabbi Gamaliel. At the very threshold of the new dispensation, before the Apostles were qualified to go forth and preach to the world the Glad Tidings, we find that marvelous school in which they were trained for three years, by the Great Teacher, who spake as never man spake. From that time on down, the life and growth of the Church have been most powerfully influenced, either for good or evil, by its Theological schools. Nor has this potent instrumentality been superseded by any new or more efficient methods. Others have been tried, but the results showed them to be less effective for good, and far more likely to breed error and confusion.

It is not, however, to be disguised, that powerful as Theological schools are for good, they are equally so for evil, when they become centers for the propagation of false doctrine. They have already been the means of poisoning the blood of the church, by inoculating it with heresies. The history of their work, in many parts of Christendom, is very suggestive and full of solemn warning. For this reason, is it, that our church insists with such peculiar emphasis upon the purity of doctrinal teaching in her seminaries, and jealously guards against the intrusion of any teacher, or doctrine, that would corrupt the simplicity of the gospel. The Presbyterian Church has always been characterized by its clear and full testimony in behalf of Christian doctrine. It has ever been able to make a positive, and intelligent statement of its beliefs, and to maintain them in the face of ridicule, hatred, persecution, and death. Its theology does not lie in a crude, gelatinous mass, to which each one may give whatever form or expression best pleases him. It is, definitely, the old covenant theology, with a granite-like rigidity and steadfastness, in its form and facts. It has been called antique; and so it is, in comparison with some modern systems, which have been produced in order to meet the demands of the times, and which are certain soon to be found in the great rub-

bish-heap of others like to them. It is the theology that Paul taught by inspiration, and that found a defender and expounder in the mighty Augustine. It is the theology that Calvin so profoundly and logically set forth, that Knox so fearlessly preached, and that the Westminister divines so strikingly formulated. It is clearly defined in the symbols of the Reformed Church—it has been tested by its fruits, and sealed by martyrs' blood. This is the theology which our seminaries must teach, if true to the purpose of their institution. They were not founded as theological observatories, in which men are to be placed on the watch to discover new truths and doctrines; nor yet as schools of scientific experiment. We have in them no chairs for redactors, and philosophers, and theorists, who come, professedly, to teach their own notions in theology, or who mistake their own speculations or fancies for historical criticisms. It is because we most firmly believe that we have a well-established system of doctrine, which we are bound before God to maintain unimpaired, that we decline to turn our seminaries into schools of philosophy and religious speculation, or to tolerate anything in them which would impair the integrity of that system of doctrine.

The men whom we, as Directors of the Seminary of the Northwest, have chosen to fill two special departments in the work of theological training, namely, the chair of Systematic Theology and the chair of Church History, are, as we believe, pre-eminently qualified for their work. They were elected unanimously by the Board, after much earnest inquiry and prayer for divine guidance. Their selection, also, has the implied approval of the highest court of our church. They come, not as novices, but as well-tried veterans in the calling for which they would train others; and we confidently believe that the sacred trust, which we are about to commit to their hands, will be faithfully discharged to the edification of the church. They will now, in your presence, give their assent to those vows which the wisdom of the church has prescribed in the constitution of this seminary, as obligatory upon all its professors.

Professors Skinner and Craig—You have been elected to the professorships of Didactic and Polemic Theology and of Bibli-

cal and Ecclesiastical History, in the Theological Seminary, and have signified your acceptance. You have also subscribed an obligation that all professors are required to take. Do you now, as God may give you strength, "in the presence of the Board of Directors of this Seminary, and these witnesses, solemnly profess your belief that the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of the Presbyterian Church contain a summary and true exhibition of the system of doctrine, order and worship taught in the Holy Scriptures, the only supreme and infallible rule of faith, and your approbation of the Presbyterian form of Church Government, as being agreeable to the Scriptures; and do you promise that you will not teach, directly or indirectly, anything contrary to, or inconsistent with, the said Confession and Catechisms, or the fundamental principles of Presbyterian Church Government, and that you will faithfully execute the office of a Professor in the Presbyterian Theological Seminary of the Northwest?"

Professor Skinner—"I do."

Professor Craig—"I do."

Beloved brethren, suffer me, in behalf of the Board of Directors, "to stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance," with reference to the importance and responsibility of the work you have undertaken. You are now to be teachers of teachers. The church in this vast and growing empire of the Northwest, intrusts to your molding hands her young men, who, she believes, have been called by the Holy Ghost to the gospel ministry; and in a very high degree it rests with you to make them efficient workmen, or to send them out incompetent and maimed for life. It would be difficult to exaggerate the importance of your work in this respect. The living ministry of the church can testify to the molding power and life-long influence of their theological teachers. One of you, at least, can most tenderly realize this, for your revered father, now with Christ in glory, still preaches from a hundred pulpits on earth, as though by his direct presence. "He being dead, yet speaketh." To be a teacher of teachers in the church of God is a position of such far-reaching and enduring influence, that angels might well covet it. A deep and constant realization

of its supreme importance, will be one of the best incentives to a thorough and diligent discharge of your duties.

So far as direction in your work is concerned, we expect of you, first of all, to be loyal to Christ. This is the chief matter, and it will regulate everything else. The most frequent and imperative charge given the preacher of the gospel, when he enters upon his work, is, "Preach Christ." If possible, more emphatic should be the exhortation to you, "Teach Christ to those who are to preach Him to others." The true theology is Christological, rather than scholastic and philosophical. There is danger, in your different departments, as you well know, of exalting some particular fact or doctrine to undue proportions, or of making it a controlling center in your teachings. The starting point in the statement or unfolding of a theological system may be the sovereignty of God, or it may be the nature of man; but neither of these can be the regulating and defining center in the Christian and Biblical system. The essence of Christianity is not a creed, nor a doctrine, nor humanity: it is Christ. He is the revelation of God, and also the revelation of humanity; and in Him alone can we know both God and man. Lose sight of Him in your teachings, and you are at sea, without chart or compass, and under a starless sky. And just as He is displaced from the central position in all your teachings, will your system be disproportioned, confused and contradictory. Facts and doctrines, though scriptural, will no longer be found in their true relations. As well expect to establish a system of astronomy which ignores the central sun, and finds a centre in the earth or some changing star, as to establish a system of theology of which the Person of Christ is not the controlling and all-regulating center. And this applies with equal force to both of the special departments of instruction which you represent. Those departments are complementary. One deals with the systematic statement of the doctrine of Christ, the other, with its application, or the unfolding of the life of Christ in human history; but both in theology, and in history, Christ is the center.

Yet when I speak of loyalty to Christ, as the first and essential requisite of your office-work, I do not mean simply the placing of

Him as a geometric centre, to determine the circle of your teachings, for alas! Christ has been taught and preached as a creed, and not as a Person. I mean loyalty to Him as a living Person, fidelity to Him, and personal communion with Him, as your Lord and Saviour. You well know, from your own experience, that it is not the genius, the learning, or the skill of the teacher, that most profoundly and permanently influences the students under his instruction, but rather that which we call his spirit. He who lives in closest communion with Christ, and, by childlike submission to His will, becomes best fitted to impart His spirit to others, is the teacher who will leave the highest and holiest impressions upon the hearts of his pupils, and thus fit them to preach Christ.

2. We expect you to be loyal to the doctrinal standards of the Presbyterian Church.

You have been called to your present position for a definite purpose, which is, to teach and defend that system of doctrine already alluded to, and which we hold is contained in the Word of God. To this work you have just now pledged yourselves by your solemn vows; nor would we for a moment suppose that you intend to make of them a Grecian horse by which to enter and betray a citadel of our faith. We rejoice in the belief that you have come to teach and defend the old theology, and not to invent a new one. But we desire to emphasize the obligations you have freely assumed, because there are men in these days who look upon such a subscription as you have made as implying a kind of bondage, intolerable to a free and generous mind. Pledges and solemn assents to ancient creeds are, in their view, so many fetters, forged to restrain liberty and hold men submissive to arbitrary authority. Progress and free thought are the favorite catch-words on their lips. They speak with swelling words about emancipation from old scholastic methods of theology, and of the necessity for restatements of truth. They tell us of a new and grander theology in the air, as yet undefined and undefinable, without any formulas or dogmas. It is yet in a nebulous condition, but, in some way, out of it are to be formed the new heavens and the new earth of a theological millennium. However this may be, of this we are most fully persuaded, that the

system of theology you are called to teach, which is established on the word of God, which has left its mark in history in connection with the noblest minds and the noblest achievements of the race, which exalts God as a God of perfect righteousness as well as of perfect love, which speaks to the deepest and indestructible convictions of the soul, awaking the conscience and producing the strongest sense of moral obligation, which sets men free from all human authority and tradition in matters of conscience, and makes them subject to God alone, is a theology the world needs now, as much as it did when Calvin or Augustine wrote or Paul preached. It is an honor, as well as a high service to men, to teach it. To be held to this system can be no bondage, except to the men who do not believe it. As well speak to the eagle soaring in the free heavens and spreading his wings to fly toward the sun, of his bondage, because he cannot dwell in the depths of the sea, or burrow like a mole in the earth! The child of truth knows his freedom, nor is he disturbed by the taunts of those who accuse him of narrowness and want of spirit, because he chooses to remain in it. Your vows necessarily demand of you to be conservative in your teachings; but the conservatism we ask of you is not that of a phonograph, which forever repeats the same formulas with the same modulations. It is the conservatism of an intelligent and abiding conviction of the truth of that which is taught or affirmed. It believes that there are some doctrines defined and settled for all time, and therefore it "holds fast the form of sound words" which it has heard. In this case, instead of being a reproach, conservatism is an evidence of knowledge, attainment, and courage of conviction. There is also a progress open to you. You may discover new applications of known truth, or clearer statements with reference to the relations of doctrines. It is possible, also, that "new light may break forth from the word of God," and time and history give us clearer views of truth. But this advance unto perfection will not be made by "laying again the foundations," and forever questioning the plainly revealed and well-established doctrines of the Word of God. Whatever God, by His grace, or in His providence, shall bring you to know, that will enable you to present

His truth, as testified to in the Confession of the Church, in a clearer light, a truer coloring, and a warmer glow of His love, that teach.

There is much in your position for your encouragement. Behind you are years of earnest toil and devotion to this work. The foundations have been laid with much prayer and through many difficulties. Before you is a wide field of great demands and great resources. From this queenly city, the lines of influence go out to the ends of the earth. No better position could be chosen for your work. We promise you our hearty co-operation, our sympathy, and our prayers. May the blessing of the Great Head of the church rest upon you, and may He so replenish you with His Holy Spirit, that with Apostolic certainty you may testify to the truth.

Inaugural Address.

BY

REV. PROF. THOMAS H. SKINNER, D.D.

THE STANDARDS AND THE MINISTRY.

Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Board of Directors of the Theological Seminary of the Northwest:

In connection with the acceptance of the Chair of Didactic and Polemic Theology in this Institution, I have taken a vow, more solemn even than that of the ministry of the church, and with which I shall be confronted in the great day. It is a covenant vow in which God, himself, is a party; a vow no mortal should take unless in covenant with Him who is the fountain of all grace and strength. The vow is made, not to you, Mr. President, nor to the directors whom you represent, but to Him who is the supreme head of the church universal, and whom the Presbyterian Church has crowned Prophet, Priest and King, in the administration of an all-transcendent covenant, formed in the timeless councils of the Deity, between the Eternal Father and his co-equal and co-eternal Son, for the manifestation of the glory of the Triune God in His vast creation, His boundless providence, and His particular redemption of the Bride of the second Person of the ineffable God-head. On Him, and on Him alone, I depend for that grace which will enable me to perform the service which my covenant vow imposes upon me.

Having accepted the high trust you have given me, it is fitting that, on this occasion, I should afford you some insight into the

spirit and views with which I shall attempt the discharge of its sacred duties and responsibilities.

The general theme under which I will endeavor to present the thought I propose to your attention, may be styled "The Doctrinal Standards of the Church and the Relations of the Ministry to them"—briefly, "The Standards and the Ministry."

These standards comprise the Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms of the Westminster divines. They constitute the doctrinal and ethical creed of the Presbyterian Church, and are made the basis and measure of theological instruction and ministerial teaching.

1. My first remark upon them relates to their Fullness. They are not the *minimum quid* but the *maximum quid* of the faith of our church. They are not a collection of a few essential truths gleaned from the Scriptures, but they are a collection of all the essential, and of what some call the non-essential, truths taught in the Scripture. They are the testimony of the church to the entire revelation of God in the Bible. They contain not merely the truths necessary to a sinner's salvation, which the weakest and most ignorant Christian can intelligently accept, but the truths God has made known for the whole service of the church in all ages and places, and which instructed and well furnished office-bearers in the church only are required to accept. They relate to the whole compass of the heavenly doctrine, to the whole extent of the church's work and life as the salt of the earth and the light of the world. The diadem of titles that adorns the brow of Christ he has placed on the brow of his church. She is with him, her divine Lord, the Prophet, the Priest, the King, the Witness, the Light, the Life of the world. And the Standards are the authoritative interpretation by the Presbyterian Church, as a witness and confessor of the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth of God. They express the fullness of her religious consciousness and belief in this regard.

The very nature of a creed evinces the propriety and importance of such a procedure. The Bible can be no standard of church fellowship or bond of church union because it is so differently under-

stood and interpreted. The Bible is not and cannot be a creed or confession. It simply furnishes the subject matter of a creed. The Bible is the expression of God's mind and will; the creed is the expression of man's faith concerning that mind and will. "Understandest thou what thou readest?" asked Philip of the eunuch. "How can I except some one guide me?" was the reply. What one reads is one thing, and what one understands by what he reads is another thing. Our creed is our understanding of what we read in the sacred Scriptures. The point is not whether the church believes the Bible, but how she interprets it. As Dr. Schaff has said: "The Bible is the Word of God to man; the creed is the answer of man to God. The Bible is the only sufficient rule of faith; the creed is the rule of public doctrine derived from the Bible." So Dr. Krauth: "The rule of faith is God's voice to us. Faith is the hearing of the voice. The confession is our reply. To confess Christ is to confess what is our faith in him. As the creed is not, and cannot be, the rule of faith, but its confession, so the Bible, because it is the rule of faith, is of necessity, not its confession. The Bible can no more be any man's creed than the stars can be any man's astronomy." To the church her interpretation of Scripture is Scripture. As has often been said, "The sense of Scripture is Scripture;" "the meaning of Scripture is Scripture." In the discovery and announcement of the meaning of Scripture, we do not exalt human authority over the divine Word, but we subject the human understanding and faith to divine truth, for the creed is ever and only, in the language of the reformers, *mensura mensurata*—the rule ruled—while the Bible is *mensura mensurans*—the rule ruling. The creed is not and does not claim to be infallible; errors may exist, but the creed is the careful, prayerful, and solemn statement of what the church, according to her light, finds to be the mind of God in the Bible. It is not a human theology; it is a human statement of a divine theology. When the Presbyterian Church adopted this creed, she adopted it as her understanding of that mind. She sought not to add one human element to that word. She well knew that her office was simply ministerial and declarative. Hence, receiving the entire

Bible as the very Word of God, she gives her answer in these Standards to God and to man, sweeping the whole field of religious faith and practice, of doctrine and duty. And this creed she gives to all her members, not as the measure and test of their individual and personal faith, but as her witness to them for instruction and guidance in the knowledge of divine truth; and upon all her ministers, as stewards of the mysteries of God, she binds this creed by solemn subscription for them to dispense its doctrines and its duties to the people. The Confession of Faith contains thirty-three chapters; the Larger Catechism one hundred and ninety-six questions and answers; and the Shorter Catechism one hundred and seven; and I do not think I am mistaken in saying that the keenest eye cannot discover any doctrine in the Bible, or scarcely a single duty, concerning which the Presbyterian Church has not given her clear and unmistakable testimony. Thus the Presbyterian Church as, according to her measure, the pillar and ground of the truth, speaks her mind openly, fully, authoritatively, concerning the contents of the volume which she declares to be the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice, and plants her banner upon the bulwarks she has raised against false doctrine and false morality on every side, protecting the fold of Christ from the cunningly devised fables which rationalism, skepticism, and criticism have spread abroad to delude and deceive the church and the world.

2. My next remark relates to the Scope of our Confessional Standards. Our creed is sometimes called a Calvinistic creed, and undoubtedly it is Calvinistic; but it is a great deal more. A few chapters and several expressions in other places of the Confession are distinctively and emphatically such. These we prize and earnestly uphold as sacred and true expositions of the very mind and will of the supreme and sovereign God; but by far the largest part of the Confession and of both the Catechisms is the statement of the faith of evangelical Christendom. So that it is not simply Calvinism which the Presbyterian Church confesses as the truth of God, but also, and just as emphatically, the common faith of the Christian Church throughout the world. We refuse to be

separated from the church universal by any peculiarity we may hold as truly as do the Lutherans, or Methodists, or Congregationalists by any peculiarity they may hold. Consubstantiation, Arminianism, or Independency, do not sever these denominations from the church catholic. As we have seen, our church gives answer in her Standards to every voice of God she hears speaking to her in the Scriptures; and her testimony to the canonicity and inspiration of the Bible, to the Being, attributes, and Tri-personality of God, to Creation and Providence, to the fall of man in Adam; to the freedom and responsibility of man, as also of angels, fallen and unfallen; to the Incarnation, atonement and mediation of the Son of God as Prophet, Priest, and King; to the mission and work of the Holy Spirit; to the calling and regeneration of the people of God, and to their justification, adoption, and sanctification; to faith and repentence and good works; to the moral law of God and liberty of the Christian; to religious worship and the holy Sabbath; to the church of God visible and invisible, to the ordinances of the church visible, its order and its government, to the divine appointment of civil magistracy, to the sanctity of marriage, and to the common doctrines of Eschatology, the state of man after death, the general resurrection, the conflagration of the world, the second advent of Christ, the general judgment, the consummation with the everlasting settlement of the universe in a state of unending rewards and punishments—I say that her testimony to this vast range of truth and duty is as clear and strong and full as is that of any other church in the world. It is a great mistake ever to speak as if the Standards of the Presbyterian Church were simply and exclusively Calvinistic. Through well nigh thirty chapters of her Confession, and in the same proportion in her Catechisms, she utters scarcely a varying note from the united witness of all the churches who hold Christ as their head. While only a Calvinist can adopt our Standards as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Scripture, all Calvinists, in adopting it, adopt, *ex-animo*, the entire common faith of the evangelical churches. Hence, the Presbyterian Church embraces in the arms of its charity and confidence, and welcomes to its fellowship and

communion all Christians, of whatever name, and joins with them in all good works.

3. I next remark upon the Subscription to the Standards by which the ministry bind themselves to teach and to preach in the service of the Presbyterian Church. The form is clear and explicit. It is of the nature of a vow, which, as the Standards themselves tell us, "is not to be made to any creature, but to God alone," and that it "is to be made voluntarily out of faith and conscience, * * whereby we strictly bind ourselves," to the duties involved in the vow. By this subscription we engage with God himself to give to His church and to the world the truths of the Bible as set forth in the Standards. The vow is an affirmative answer to this question: "Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith of this church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scripture?" and the party promises, in like manner, "to be zealous and faithful in maintaining the truths of the gospel, and the purity and peace of the church."

This subscription is not (*a*) on the one hand, an adoption of the Confession of Faith for "substance of doctrine." Some have held this to be its meaning, but on the very face of the words it is otherwise. Substance of doctrine is one thing, or another thing, or anything the private judgment of the minister may choose to make out of the Confession. It thereby ceases to be a standard, a measure, a test of public doctrine, and no congregation could know what they might expect to be taught in the ministrations of their pastor. The Presbyterian Church does not leave her testimony to the revelations of Scripture, to the uncertainties and variations of such an engagement. Substance of doctrine has sometimes been considered equivalent to the "essential and necessary" truths of Christianity. What these truths are, such a subscription by no means determines. They may embrace simply the common faith of the evangelical churches, omitting Calvinism and Arminianism, and all the distinctive peculiarities of the different denominations; or, they may embrace only such parts of the common faith as the minister may deem "essential and necessary," as the recent discussion in connection with the Andover troubles abundantly shows.

Our church has no such view of the vow she imposes upon her ministry.

Nor (*b*) on the other hand, is the subscription an adoption of all the words and sentences of all the chapters in the Confession of Faith, and all the answers of the Catechisms. This would exalt the interpretation of the Scriptures by the church to an equality with the Word of God itself, and put a yoke on the consciences of the ministers, too grievous to be borne. It would practically nullify the first of the vows our minister takes when he declares that "the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the only infallible rule of faith and practice." It would destroy the necessary distinction between the Bible as the word of God to man and the creed as the answer of man to God. The *ipsissima verba* subscription has always been repudiated by the church. As Dr. Hodge says, "there never was a period in our history in which all the ministers agreed in adopting every proposition contained in the Confessions and Catechisms. It is notorious that such agreement does not now exist."

But (*c*) the subscription is an adoption of the "system of doctrine" contained in the Standards as that taught in the Holy Scripture. It is a system exegetically and inductively derived from the Scripture and expresses the Presbyterian Church's view of a purely divine theology. Calvinism may be called a system of doctrine, and, as such, it is to us an essential and integral part of revealed truth, but it is not distinctively *the* system of doctrine referred to in the formula of subscription. This includes Calvinism, but with it, as we have seen, the entire common faith of the evangelical churches.

And more, when we receive and adopt the system of doctrine in this comprehensive sense, we, at the same time, receive and adopt the doctrines of the system. The two are organically joined together and can not be put asunder. If we receive the system we receive the doctrines; if we receive the doctrines we receive the system. The system would be as truly nullified by the denial of the evangelical doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation, as by the denial of the Calvinistic doctrines of the decrees and the perse-

verance of the saints. Its unity and integrity depend upon the doctrines of which it consists, and these are found in the thirty-three chapters of the Confession. Each chapter states a doctrine; we sincerely receive and adopt the doctrine contained in that chapter. There may be expressions, sentences, clauses in its elaboration which are unnecessary, obsolete, incorrect. They are not essential to the doctrine. The thing we adopt is the doctrine, and not every word or proposition which occurs in its statement. These are often mere *obiter dicta*, not affecting the vitality and integrity of the doctrine. That stands though these are ignored. We accept the doctrine while we reject these sentences. For example: the teaching of the Confession concerning The Church is clear and full and Scriptural, accepted by all denominations which have Standards of public doctrine; but the assertion in the chapter that the Pope is "in the church," is denied by some, because this makes the church of Rome a part of the church of God; and that he is "the man of sin and son of perdition" is denied by others, because this would imply that the papacy will continue till the second advent of Christ, and be destroyed by the brightness of His coming, which only pre-millennists would hold. We can accept or reject these propositions, but we must accept the cardinal doctrine concerning the church formulated in the chapter.

Thus the Presbyterian Church repudiates the subscription of her creed, whether for substance of doctrine or for the truth of its every word and sentence, and binds her ministers to the system of doctrine and to the doctrines of the system therein taught, as taught likewise in the infallible Word of God.

4. This leads me to remark upon the Attitude of mind in a minister and teacher who has subscribed this system of doctrine. It is that of one who has attained to an assured knowledge of the system and of its doctrines as the truth of God revealed in the Scriptures. It is that of one who has passed the stage of doubt and incertitude and inquiry. It is that of a mind settled, established, and illumined in the divine verity and authority of the system. This does not imply that more may not be known of the Scripture and its teachings than the Standards declare, but it does

mean, 1st. That what is known is known. 2d. That what may be known or discovered will be in entire consistency with what is already known. As the New Testament is all in the line of the Old Testament teaching, fulfilling it—filling it out—so all new truth discovered in the New must be in the line both of the Old and the New Testaments. "Whereto we have already attained we must walk by the same rule and mind the same things." There may be more truth break forth from the Bible to the souls of men than is confessed in the Standards notwithstanding their fullness; but there will be no discovery that will overthrow that which is founded on the bed rock of the divine testimony. The new claimant for a place in the creed of the church must be examined and tested by those doctrines that have held possession from the first. Nothing can be admitted that will contradict the old doctrines of, for example, the Inspiration of the Scriptures, the Trinity, the Incarnation and Mediation of the Second Person, or the mission and work of the Third Person, of effectual calling, justification, sanctification, the church, the resurrection, the final judgment and endless retributions for the deeds done in the body. Our Standards teach that there is no second probation, no "middle place," intermediate between heaven and hell for the souls of the departed. They declare that "the souls of the righteous, at their death, are received into the highest heavens, and that the souls of the wicked, at their death, are cast into hell, and that besides these two places for souls separated from their bodies the Scripture acknowledgeth none." If a minister of the Presbyterian Church is satisfied that the Scriptures do teach otherwise on this or any other doctrine of our creed, it is a duty of common honesty, as well as of Christian propriety, either to lay his doubts of the old and confidence in his new doctrine, not before his church nor the public in pamphlet or newspaper or book, but before his Presbytery for their consideration and action, or "peaceably withdraw" from the Presbyterian Church who received him into her communion on the ground of his cordial acceptance of the doctrines of the Standards and promise to study the peace, unity and purity of the church.

As this matter of certitude in the ministry concerning the

Scripturalness of our Confession is of supreme moment in these times, let us look at it more narrowly.

Eleven young men go forth from our walls to-day to be ministers of the Word, having spent three years in the persistent inductive investigation of the doctrines of our system. For a year or more they have been licentiates of their respective Presbyteries, having been examined and tried as to their knowledge and attainments, and having sincerely received and adopted our system of doctrine as the truth of God. After another year of reflection upon and continued study of these doctrines, they now approach the sacred office. They do it with earnest prayer and supplication, and with their solemn vows of allegiance to the Standards repeated and emphasized and sealed by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery. They have studied our system in all its doctrines, one by one. They have studied the Bible text by text, in its parts and in its whole. They have studied each independently and both together, and the result is a deep conviction, an inward persuasion of the agreement of the two—the Bible and the Confession alike teaching the same system of doctrine. Theirs is no blind acquiescence in the traditional faith of the church. They enter upon their divine calling, not as seekers after the truth which they have not found, but as Teachers of the truth which they have found. They occupy the sacred desk not to lead the people through the painful labyrinth of investigation and speculation and doubt and philosophy, but to declare the known mind and will of God with authority, as the messengers of the Lord of Hosts. As I said, the time has gone by for doubt as to the contents of the sacred Scriptures, for doubt as to the contents of the Confession. Their meaning is not a matter of search and inquiry. Were this the case, the minister would simply confess his ignorance and his unfitness to be a teacher. A teacher must know what he teaches. If he teaches what he does not know, he should cease teaching at once. He has not yet come to the knowledge of the truth which he openly professed. He has need that some one teach him what are the first principles of the oracles of God. His position is one of self-inconsistency and of danger alike to himself and to the people

who called him to be their teacher and guide. Let me quote a few lines from Garbett's Dogmatic Faith, pertinent to the point I am urging. He says, "An inquirer after truth cannot be a teacher of truth. He may teach, no doubt, others less advanced than himself, but it will be the teaching of his own struggles and difficulties. * * A teacher should be a believer, not an enquirer; and a teacher in the ministry of a dogmatic church should be a believer in a dogmatic faith. He dare not teach what he does not assuredly believe, lest he should either convert a lie into the truth of God, or turn the truth of God into a lie. * * If the state of an inquirer has its own appropriate mental condition, so also has the state of a believer. Doubt belongs to the one but a firm and reasonable assurance to the other. * * No dim vagueness of impression, no feeble uncertainty of conviction, no faltering grasp of truth, no coward's timidity in maintaining and confessing it, become those who are inheritors of the faith of prophets and apostles. The hero's strength and martyr's constancy are no less taxed in the sphere of belief than of practice. God himself appeals to them: 'Be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine,' but, 'watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.'" These are clarion notes that should be sounded far and wide in our day. The Presbyterian Church is rooted and grounded in their divine verity; and she proclaims to the world not only the fixedness and certitude of the Bible as the only infallible rule of faith, and of the Confession as the true interpretation of the Bible, but also the fixedness and certitude of her ministry in their full assurance of the truth of both. The men she sends forth to minister to her congregations are sent forth after careful and protracted preparation and many tests and provings, and they are sent forth as the defenders and maintainers against all comers of the venerable faith of the Standards.

I know not how our church could more effectually assure the Christian world of the character and the teaching of her ministry than she has done. They may not, they cannot, without violence to their consciences, impugn or impair the doctrines of her Standards, nor teach the people of our communion, nor of any other

communion, different and adverse statements of Bible truth. They are bound to them not only with the sanctity of a free and unforced public engagement, but also with the cords of love and the bands of a man. The Presbyterian ministry are rightly accounted and commissioned and sent forth as selected, instructed, honest and faithful men, holding fast the form of sound words the church and they alike have adopted, and able by sound doctrine both to exhort and convince the gainsayers. They are not children carried to and fro with every wind of doctrine. They do not follow cunningly devised fables, but their lips keep knowledge and the people learn the law and the gospel at their mouth.

I think that these statements are clear and self-evident. If, then, the ministry of the Presbyterian Church are thus equipped, commissioned and trusted, with what emphasis do these statements hold true as to the professors in the theological seminaries of the church? If licentiate and ordination and installation vows constrain the pastorate, are not the instructors of the pastorate even more sacredly bound to fidelity and loyalty? That such is the view of the church is seen in the superadded covenant into which they enter when they are inducted into their several chairs. The moral spectacle of recreancy to the Standards on the part of a pastor is sad enough; how painful that of a teacher in the theological seminary! If the time for inquiry as to the truth of the system and its doctrines is gone by in the case of the ordinary ministry, surely it is gone by far out of sight in the case of a theological professor. If a secret doubt concerning any doctrine invades the mind of a pastor which, Delilah-like, cuts the locks of his strength, alas for the professor into whose mind such secret doubt has entered, on whose conscience and understanding the fatal spell has bound itself! Of all men in the church he must dwell on the mountain-top above all clouds and mists, in serene and divine assurance of the Truth he has vowed to teach.

There may be some questions outside our system of doctrine, whose fullness and wide scope has already been described, where the field of inquiry is open and the search after truth is free; but within that system, the case is wholly different. For a minister

under vows to teach and maintain it, to raise questions that touch its integrity, is to touch the apple of the eye of our church. That system is not a recent product of the mind of the church. It is not the original product of the Westminster divines. It is the fruit of the ages. It is the result of all the foregoing study of the Scriptures and conflicts with heresies on the part of the church of God from the beginning. It is the sacred heritage of the church owned and blessed of the Holy Ghost. It has been most diligently searched through and through by successive generations of gifted students of the Bible. It has been studied and is being studied by every living minister of the Presbyterian Church, and to say that we do not know what we subscribe to when we enter the ministry, and what we continue to subscribe to while we continue in the ministry, is a sheer, wild absurdity. I venture to say that no system of philosophy, no system of science, no system of ethics, no earthly system of human thought, is so well and so assuredly known as the system of doctrine taught in the Confession of Faith. And, therefore, it is a legitimate and most seemly and righteous thing for the Presbyterian Church to require of all her ministers, and pre-eminently of all her professors, a public and solemn adherence to her Standards.

I know that some object to this strain of discourse. Free thought, free speech, free inquiry is their demand, the legend inscribed on their banner. These are their watch-words, should I not say their catch-words, by which they would allure from the church her young men and maidens, and, if possible, deceive the very elect. But these watchwords belong to the realm of incertitude and doubt and inquiry. The Presbyterian Church has a banner, blue as the cerulean Heaven, but its stars are not wandering stars; they are fixed and shining, shining brighter and brighter as the darkness deepens. To her, positive and everlasting truths, fixed and immutable principles are the necessity of her being. To be ever learning without ever coming to certain and assured knowledge may be pleasing and fascinating to skeptics and inquirers, but this is a very different thing from having come to the knowledge of the truth of God, and then to be learning more and more of that

truth, the knowledge of which is life eternal. To move onward from that which is fixed and known and true, is a very different thing from what it is to move in zigzag directions from the unfixed, uncertain, and, perchance, untrue. To honestly embrace our system of doctrine as that contained in the Holy Scriptures is not to narrow and hamper and enslave the mind. Doubt, incertitude, inquiry, these check and clip the wings of the soul. Only when we know the truth, does the truth make us free. Only when thus emancipated can we make real progress in the knowledge of that truth which passeth knowledge because it is inexhaustible, infinite.

There is more life and power in the old truths of the Standards than in all the novelties of the century. These old, antiquated truths are quick and powerful and sharper than a two-edged sword; and, sometimes, by the blessed Spirit, become so vivid and precious and mighty as to seem fresh and new, just out of Heaven, enlivening, thrilling, entrancing the soul as by a beatific vision.

We sometimes hear about progressive Calvinism, progressive theology, to which we make no objection if it be such as that just named. In any other sense we do most earnestly object to it. It is a solemn and momentous fact, that the six thousand ministers of our church have subscribed to the Standards unaltered in a single chapter as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scripture. Nor have we seen one improvement suggested, which, under our form of subscription, would materially enhance in value either the Calvinism or the common evangelical faith of our Standards. That form of subscription is not, as we have shown, a subscription to every word and sentence and proposition of every chapter of the Confession, but to the specific doctrines of the system it teaches, and while these doctrines are accepted, we may lose more than we will gain by attempting improvements which are generally based upon the rejected *ipsissima verba* subscription.

The Standards are still the text-book of the Seminaries of our church, and their professors, at their induction into office, are bound by solemn vows not only to teach the system of doctrine

contained in the Standards, but they solemnly promise "not to teach directly or indirectly anything contrary to or inconsistent with the Confession and Catechisms." Assuredly it does not become them to initiate departures from the Standards. The vows of God are upon them to adhere to these Standards with all fidelity and earnestness. And so, both ministers and professors, the entire *ecclesia docens*, are pledged to these doctrines, severally and collectively, and for them to undermine, impugn or traduce them, is to destroy the whole fabric of our church existence, and to introduce a practical immorality, which, if generally allowed, would destroy the social and civil fabric of humanity. For holding and maintaining these views we are called theological demagogues, doctrinaires, theorists, dogmatists, intolerant, illiberal, bigoted, and the like. But this is an old trick, practised both within and without the church. Such titles do not alarm or trouble us. They cannot move us from our integrity as men and as Christians. We have, I speak it in behalf of the immense majority of our ministry, we have publicly and squarely subscribed the Standards, and we just as publicly and squarely maintain the Standards which we have subscribed, "whatever opposition or persecution may arise to us on that account."

5. The last topic to which I would call your attention relates to the Calvinism of our Standards. The ministers of the Presbyterian Church are distinctively, emphatically a Calvinistic ministry. They are upholders and defenders of the common faith of the evangelical churches, but they are also upholders and defenders of certain divine truths which John Calvin sought to vindicate as distinguished from those taught by Arminius and Luther. It is this which is the reason of the justification of our separate denominational existence. I cheerfully admit that there is what some account a hard—certainly an unpopular—side to the doctrines to which we refer. This, however, could hardly be otherwise; for that especial and distinctive aspect of thought which marks our Confession is, perhaps, more liable to misconception than that aspect of thought which distinguishes others, just as, if I may venture the illustration, many statements of St. Paul give rise to more

objections and misconstructions than any of those of St. James and St. John.

The distinction of Calvinism is that it believes in God, as well as in man; in Godhood, as well as in manhood; in Divine sovereignty, as well as in human freedom; in the First great cause, as well as in second causes; in certainty, as well as contingency. And its high endeavor is to exalt and magnify, primarily and fundamentally and all-comprehensively, the infinite, eternal, and unchangeable Jehovah, of whom and through whom are all things, to whom be glory forever. We put God foremost, God midst, God last, in whom we and all creatures live and move and have their being. And while, owing in some part to the insufficiency of human language, and also to the incomprehensibleness of the divine nature and His modes of operation, there are many things mysterious, difficult, and, by us, impossible of reconciliation, yet these things are none the less true, sublime and mighty. Divine mysteries, however vast, remote, and insoluble, things down deep in the immensity of the divine thought, have ever had a strong fascination to the Presbyterian Church. Things of God which please us, which shine clearly and sweetly in our hearts, which bring God near to us and make him seem like ourselves in our better nature, are gratefully received and treasured; but the hidings and inaccessable glories of him we call our Father are very precious to us, because in them are heights and depths, and lengths and breadths of grandeur and power and working, which, though we do not attempt to understand them, we are yet permitted to believe to the utmost bounds of our capacity to believe. And our faith amid their thick darkness or blinding brightness, if simple and childlike, prostrates us in adoring reverence before that supreme majesty who reigns over all, Lord God Omnipotent, and awakens in us intensest longings for that full fellowship with him in glory, where we shall see him face to face, and the wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth of his vast but utterly inscrutable administration of the universe of angels, devils, men, creatures, shall shine radiantly through all our faculties. And it is the effort of our

ministry to grasp this view and hold it forth till more and more shall see its divinity and experience its wonderful power.

And more, our doctrine, while it thus aims to exalt the great God, tends to humble man. It recognizes, fully and clearly, the apostasy, spiritual death, helplessness, and dependence on divine mercy, of mankind. It renders the whole glory of human salvation to God. It takes the language of prayer which every Christian uses, and then holds to the truth which that language expresses. We largely vindicate our Calvinistic statements by their identity with the confessions, supplications and adorations of the people of God everywhere. What men are on their knees before God, that we make them in our religious formularies; and we ever claim that all men are Calvinists in prayer whatever else they may be in controversy and argument. When we acknowledge that "all holy desires and just thoughts proceed from God," we set forth the fact that they do verily proceed from God working them in the suppliant, and not from the suppliant producing them in himself. When we cry, "Create within us, O God, a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within us," we ascribe to God alone the power for such effects. And so with prayer in all cases. We teach that men are saved by grace through faith, and not by grace through works; that all is of grace, nothing partly by grace and partly by free will. We teach that no man, in the first instance, chooses himself unto holiness and eternal life, but that God in his mercy chooses him thereunto; and no man left to himself would ever come to Christ, but that sinners come to him as they are, secretly, unconsciously, but effectively, drawn to him. We hold that while God condemns no man except for sin, he saves no one except out of mere mercy. We hold that God is an Infinite Sovereign, dealing with a lost world, and that He determined in the eternal Covenant of Redemption on the salvation of His people who come by His effectual grace to Christ in faith and love, and by the same grace persevere to the end. We do not separate grace from the means of grace, but tie them together, so that willful neglect of them becomes an evident token of perdition. We do not separate God's free grace from man's free will. No one is forced. All who come

to Christ come freely of their own accord because they wish to come. These things God has revealed but not explained. The predestination which the Bible announces, and the free agency of which we are conscious, providence and duty, God's spirit and our activity, are sundered in human philosophy, but united in the Bible, and we deny, we ignore neither. Their connection and consistency are unsearchable, utterly impenetrable by our present capacities, but we find both sets of truth in the Bible, like two mighty columns piercing the skies, whose uniting arch is beyond our vision. And in the mysteries of His eternal counsels, we believe that God loves men a thousand-fold more than they love themselves, and in their helplessness and dependence, we adore the plentitude of that ineffable grace which decrees that where sin abounds grace shall much more abound. We hold as strenuously as any church to free will, responsibility and accountability for thoughts, words, and deeds, and to the obligation of instant faith, love, and obedience, but we likewise permeate and penetrate everything with God and make Him the first cause and last end of all things.

And this suggests my concluding remark. With us the Glory of God is the supreme end of His own existence, and our chief end must accord with His; it must be to glorify Him and enjoy Him forever. In this matter we are often much misrepresented, but there is to us such a sublimity, such an ineffable splendor in this, that no amount of perversion or obloquy on account of it will make us relinquish either the language or the idea. For God is absolute perfection, the sum of excellence and all blessedness; and no higher, no better end can be conceived than this, to unfold and pour forth His own fullness throughout His universe. He is an infinite Spirit, eternal and unchangeable, filling immensity with His presence, as perfectly present with atoms and molecules, with thoughts and emotions, as with globes and constellations. He is all-wise, all-knowing, all-mighty, all-just, all-holy, all-true, incomprehensiby, inconceivably great. And all these perfections are merged in and actuated by the purest, freest love. Love is the life, the central principle, the all-embracing property of His nature;

and, according to the Bible, love is self-sacrifice; it is the offering up of self in the impassioned, but wise and holy, service of others. Its profound instinct is self-abandonment, at infinite expense if need be, for others, and, therefore, the supreme glory of God is the coming forth from His eternal triune existence in condescension, compassion and benignity, and making His creatures blessed in the enjoyment of Himself. Faber thus beautifully expresses this idea:

Oh, wonderful! Oh, passing thought!
The love that God hath had for thee;
Spending on thee no less a sum,
Than the undivided Trinity.

Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost,
Exhausted for a thing like this;
The whole world's government disposed,
For one ungrateful creature's bliss.

When, then, we teach that God exists for His own glory, we teach that He exists to make every attribute and all the resources of His unlimited being subservient to the good of others. Some charge that it is infinitely selfish in God to seek His own glory, but our doctrine makes His selfishness infinite disinterestedness and benevolence. "God is love," says St. John, and the demonstration of it is that He gave His only begotten Son in a bloody and awful sacrifice, as the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world; the only gift which could cost Him anything, and which, I utter it in the profoundest adoration of my nature, cost Him everything He could surrender and still be God.

The glory of God, viewed in its wider aspects, however, is to us a matter of simple faith; it passes knowledge; it is the hardest thing to be understood and comprehended in the whole Bible, and this, not merely on account of its excessive brightness, but because in the administration of His providence, so many clouds and such thick darkness are about him. As the different and seemingly contrasted rays of the sun are combined in its light; as the sun gathers, and blends, and transfigures them in its glorious radiance, so are the diversified and seemingly contrasted attributes, purposes

and works of God, all gathered and blended and transfigured in love. But the pure sunlight, to our vision, must be darkened to be seen, and so God's love is imperfectly seen and understood by us now. The existence and prevalence of sin and woe, the fall of man, the ruin of souls angelic and human, and the like, serve to cast deep shadows over the divine glory. But we live in the assured faith that, in due time, God's inmost nature will shine out, irradiating the universe and His holiness, justice, wisdom and power, which baffle our reason now, will be illumined, and that forever, with the visible splendors of infinite, disinterested, blessed love. Then we shall see no more through a glass darkly, but we shall see as we are seen and know as we are known.

If others can not look at these things just as we do, we will patiently wait and hope. But for the Presbyterian Church and ministry to sink their peculiarities of faith and surrender their profound convictions, would not be for the peace, unity, and advancement of the church universal, but the very reverse. We ask nothing of the sort from our sister denominations. Such a general surrender would put into fearful jeopardy the fundamental truths in which we agree. We rejoice in all their struggles after the full truth of those things of which they have caught glimpses of a fuller vision. In this holy and earnest pursuit of sacred verities, over and above "the common and precious faith" to which we have all attained, we will gradually come nearer and nearer to each other; but it will take time. We are all urging our way slowly, steadily, into the mystical temple of absolute truth, and we will not rest till, through the rent veil, we enter the Holy of Holies, and worship together before the Shekinah of everlasting truth and everlasting love.

Inaugural Address.

BY

REV. WILLIS G. CRAIG, D.D.,

PROFESSOR OF BIBLICAL AND ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY.

THE STUDY OF HISTORICAL THEOLOGY.

Gentlemen of the Board:

The wisdom of the fathers of our church, in providing a symmetrical course of study, arranged in chairs, devoted to special departments of what may be properly called General Theological Science, each chair or department supplementing all others, in an orderly and purposed way, until the whole science has been traversed, is worthy of our highest admiration, and is a special reminder to us of the only method by which our theological students can be thoroughly instructed in the contents of their chosen profession.

If there should be too great an appreciation of one department of the general science, and a corresponding depreciation of all the others, or if two or more of the departments should be unduly elevated to the point of overshadowing the remaining two or more, an undoubted injury would be inflicted on the course as a whole, its symmetry would be marred, the total impression of the instruction would be defective, and the students subjected to this one-sided development would be far from rounded, scholarly, professional men. In this way the path would be opened for a class of narrow, bigoted, unfruitful ministers, a premium would be put on the habit of partial examination of even the most important subjects, the many-sided, intelligent, genial preacher, standing in the

focus of light streaming in from every direction, would disappear, and in his place we would have the assertive man, bold, perhaps, but narrow, walking in ruts, without the wisdom which comes from familiarity with the past, without the elegance of diction which comes from severe linguistic culture, without the power of logically advancing argument, which comes from attention to the structure, membership and graces of digested speech, without the power of illustration, which comes from large observation and extensive reading, and, hence, without the commanding force which should be characteristic of every educated minister. To provide against this tendency to narrowness in education, and its consequent feebleness, is the very object of the symmetrical course of theological study, arranged by our fathers, as the basis of instruction in their schools of sacred learning.

The symmetry and mutually supplementary character of the departments, which in their totality make up a complete system of theological science, is better understood, and more carefully expressed, as experience in practical instruction grows larger and more exact. And as an expression of their view the departments in a well-ordered theological seminary might be arranged somewhat as follows :

Chair of Dogmatic or Formulated Theology.

Chair of Historical Theology.

Chair of Old Testament Exegetical Theology.

Chair of New Testament Exegetical Theology.

Chair of Pastoral and Sermonic Theology.

Chair of Constitutional Theology, expressing the divine form given to the church in the Scriptures.

Under the idea thus expressed, and which doubtless lies at the bottom of the arrangement made by the church for the organization of theological seminaries, each department of instruction would dovetail into all the others, and all work together toward a harmonious unity of theological knowledge.

The duty, then, of each incumbent of a chair would be to bring his department into deserved prominence, to make it of equal interest with all the others, with no spirit of rivalry, but with the

distinct understanding that the actual product of the school will be defective unless his department does its full share, in molding and storing with important knowledge the mind of each student. In the light of this view it will be my duty to care for, and press to a proper point of development, the Department of "Biblical and Ecclesiastical History," or, as it has been named by Principal Cunningham, "Historical Theology."

I. The importance of this department.

What, it may be asked, is the proper idea of Church History?

A distinguished historian has said, "The church is always in a progressive state—*i. e.*, it is striving to be a perpetual manifestation of the life of Christ in humanity. It is always aiming to exhibit life on a more extensive scale, sometimes in conflict, sometimes in connection, with the world. Critically, it is an impartial, honest, and strict inquiry into facts, and the proofs. Genetically, it is a statement of the facts in connection with the causes which produce them. Theologically, it is an estimation of the facts in their precise relation to the religious spirit."—*Hase, pp. 1–2.*

Another historian, not less distinguished and in some respects more valuable, has said, "The history of the church is the unfolding in time of the eternal purpose of redeeming love. It is the progressive development of the kingdom of heaven on earth for the glory of God and the salvation of the world. As an art it is the faithful and life-like description of the origin and progress of the heavenly kingdom, embracing not only external fortunes, but her inward experience."—*Schaff, vol. I, pp. 1–3.*

In this view the movement of the Christian church must be regarded with the profoundest interest, and the study which seeks to unfold its history may be well considered of signal importance.

In a large sense it opens up the most important field of investigation to which the mind of man can be attracted; for it presents the loftiest conceptions of the divine character, deals with all the highest, most permanent elements of human thought, considers the profoundest problems of human nature, discovers the Divine Being Himself, in the midst of the solution of these problems, and portrays the action of mankind, under the influence of revealed

truth, struggling to be free from sin, and to attain to a satisfactory adjustment of eternal interests.

It is the career of a divine institution, that we are to study in this department, in its origin, in its design, in its principles, in its subjects, in its sublime movement organized for victory.

We must survey with accuracy and impartiality the external movement of the kingdom of God on earth, and then seek with skillful hand to portray its continuous development, until the personality of the church, so to speak, will stand out, feature by feature, a living, moving power. But not only is the outward movement to be traced and described, the inner springs of its life are to be sought out and displayed, so that the living forces which have produced the outward movement may be viewed and understood. It is no dry chronicle which church history proposes, with its simple dates and names and sequences. This the dreary task of the uninstructed annalist. It is rather to watch the career of an unearthly kingdom through this world of ours, instinct with living principles, quickened with resistless moral energies, and bent to the holiest ends, as it works its way step by step through the tumult and travail of the ages toward the final victory. It is not so much, then, with fading earthly crowns, with rising, tottering, falling earthly empires, or with the growth and decay, the contractions and expansions of a purely human science, that she has to do. These, incidentally, as they cross her path, subserve her purposes, or receive the renovations which she has come to effect. The progress of the kingdom of God through the earth is a nobler movement than any of these can show. It may be described as the gracious energy of God put into an organized form among men for the redemption of a lost race, with temporal interests of the highest sort to conserve, but dominated by its concern for the eternal interests of a race living in deadly peril both as regards its present and future welfare. To accomplish this deliverance is its central intent, and its career will be followed with breathless interest so long as this high and gracious purpose is kept in view. If, then, the study of our department considered only the work wrought in behalf of a ruined race by the church, its career would

be sure to engage the attention of thoughtful men. But when we remember that the history of the church unfolds to our view, and not only to us, but to all sentient creatures, the being and character of God as no other mode of communication has done or can do, we are bound to admit that the progress of this divine institution is fitted not only to arrest and engage attention, but to enchain human thought as with the power of a consummate fascination. What is it, we may ask, in the career of this kingdom that so arouses the interest of angelic beings, that they are represented in Scripture as crowding to the utmost limit of their habitations to look into it? How is it that by the church, as a special intent, there will be made known unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places the manifold wisdom of God? It is simply this, that by means of the historic movement of the church, God has revealed the profoundest depths of his being, to-wit: His tri-personal existence as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, together with all the tremendous spiritual capacities which are relevant to these ineffable distinctions, of which paternal love, filial love and unfathomable grace are the most conspicuous. If, then, the history of the church unfolds, as it most surely does, the being and activities of God in their profoundest aspects, we may conclude as to the importance of its study, and may, without impropriety, challenge the most unwearied assiduity of students to the inquiry, which traces its lofty career among these astonishing elements of the divine life, and hardly less astonishing, because co-responsive, elements of human life.

II. But, perhaps, the importance of church history as a department of theological science, will appear more clearly if we indicate briefly the lines along which it may be expected to move.

Here all church historians are agreed.

As the church is an aggressive institution with a positive interest, to-wit., the domination of the world for Christ, history must second her advance movements, as she bears her banner from land to land. Later historians call this the work of missions. Starting out from Jerusalem as a center she must, in order to effectuate her divine calling, give the gospel first to Judea, then to Samaria, then

to the uttermost part of the world. She is not left to her own instincts, elevated and tender toward men as they may be. She lives from the beginning under the pressure of a divine command, "Go ye into all the world discipling all nations." We will have, then, in this department, the unspeakable pleasure of tracing the missionary movements of the church from the moment she received her divine charter from Christ until the present time. Whether in the work of carefully indoctrinating and training the populations already overtaken, which may be called the sphere of home missions, or in the, if possible, still nobler work of advancing the standard to regions still beyond, lying under the very shadow of death, which may be named the sphere of foreign missions, the whole of the aggressive work of the church will pass beneath our review. When engaged in this holy labor the church is in her proper sphere. Then it is that she shines in her lovliest colors, and her career stirs the blood of generous men of every generation to the imitation of her heroic deeds. As we follow her missionary progress we will meet the different races of men, and study their peculiarities. We will read the life-story of her most distinguished missionaries, who braved the dangers of the trackless forests, the burning deserts, the fierce barbarism of untutored savages, and hardly less trying difficulties of unknown tongues and clinging superstitions, to win immortal conquests for Christ, and ere yet the story is finished we will declare in the fervor of a deep-seated conviction that these bold, disciplined men so far surpass in true heroism and lasting glory the crowned heads, who would fain hold the pages of history as a private possession, that there is hardly a ground for legitimate comparison, and above all, I trust we will imbibe the true spirit of missions until the students of this school of sacred learning, fired by the holy ardor of these noble examples, and consecrated by the central truth of God's unearthly kingdom, will go forth in increasing numbers to occupy the advance posts, and stand upon the high places of the field, whether at home or abroad.

But as the world in sin is a dense mass of ignorance, superstition and unbelief, ever resisting the inroads of light and truth,

history must give an account of the interruptions which served to kindle the advance of Christianity. For the first three hundred years of its existence, the kingdom of God was according to human decrees, *ecclesia ilicita*, and by perverted human actions *ecclesia pressa*. So history must consider the cruel persecutions which tried and purified the faith of the early church, which taught it at once the desperate wickedness of the human heart, and the indefectible, undying nature of divine truth. We shall, as students in this department, come to understand, as we study the sad record of these early years, and as from time to time we meet the same persecuting spirit in later periods, the full meaning of our Lord's solemn but imperative requirement, when he said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it." "He that loveth father and mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross and followeth after me is not worthy of me."

And I verily believe, as we mingle our sighs and tears over the recorded hardships and sufferings of these noble witnesses for God, the awful, but truly glorious spirit of self-denial and full consecration will take possession of our yielding hearts.

As the church does not consist of an undefined series of loose, unaccounted particulars, but is a distinct, divinely ordered organization, the study of this department will lead us to consider the constitution of the church. I may say, without hesitation, that we will find in the New Testament not only the general principles, but the original form of the church constitution. Having once gained a knowledge of these regulative principles, and observed in outline, at least, the form into which the apostles cast the Christian church, we will be prepared to trace the various and erratic developments unwise men overlaid upon its original form, until we see the process culminating in the Romish hierarchy, a development, not only unscriptural, but which, as judged from the standpoint of a clarified human reason, must be declared as simply audacious. With the lessons drawn from the gigantic usurpation,

one will be ready to observe with interest the labors of the Reformation to bring back the church to its scriptural form of organization, and will be led to rejoice in the simplicity of its true form, and the efficiency of its working.

As God has entrusted the church with the Holy Oracles, wherein are laid down the eternal facts or truths, upon which human redemption proceeds, the inquiry of this department must be directed constantly and closely to the history of doctrine.

To this branch of study the historian must give reverent and unwearied attention; for the great saving doctrines of God's Word were not perceived all at once in their completed number and full integrity. On the contrary, the knowledge of these doctrines was a matter of growth, and that through long continued, painstaking and even heated discussion. One by one the precious doctrines of the faith rose to the spiritual perception of the church. Each one of them has been through the crucible of protracted debate before it could take its place in the authoritative formularies of the church, and, therefore, each doctrine has a history of its own.

In the light of this history, each doctrine can be best understood, for here alone we find it in its supremest applications to human needs. No branch of church history is so interesting as this one. For doctrine is the life of the church, in all its true advances upon the world of sin and death, the bulwark of the church in every shock of opinion, the resuscitating principle by which alone the church could have hope to come forth from the frequent declines into which sin and worldliness have seduced her.

Doctrine clearly revealed in the Word of God, expressed and verified by ample and exhaustive discussion, and vindicated by its influence upon the church and the world, is the palmary feature of sacred history. We pass by with mere mention, the development of worship, the moral life of the church, the varied discipline by which purity has been sought and offenders warned, though history will not neglect these. Of course the history of the church flows by the side and over into the general or secular life of the world, in the midst of which it exercises its office; and accurate

account must be given of many of the great world movements, especially at important epochs.

Along these general lines the historic movement will pass. The very mention of the fields through which it must pass is sufficient to vindicate the assertion of its importance.

III. The manner of study in this department.

We must have the historic temper.

Mr. Hatch, in a recent series of lectures on the Bampton Foundation, entitled "The Organization of the Early Christian Church," has called attention to this necessity with remarkable force. Too often a distinctively polemic temper has been the guide of historic investigations. The purpose has been, as has been somewhere remarked, to dig from the quarry of history the materials with which to build an impregnable fortress around a chosen theological or constitutional position. And when the materials, as they come from their venerable deposit, would not quite square to the wall which was being erected, the hammer of the historical builder would knock off a corner here and a rough edge there, and see to it that he made a fit. Numerous instances of this might be given. The facts of the early church constitution were for a long time distorted by unquestioning silence upon the pseudo Ignatius epistles. Nothing but partisanship could have blinded the eyes of prelatical writers to the spuriousness of four, if not all, the epistles attributed to Ignatius. History was made to repeat for long years the gift of a temporal domain to the Bishop of Rome, by Constantine. History was required to indorse the monstrous claims of the decretals of the pseudo Isidore, as the basis of the audacious assertions of papal supremacy. History has been forced to assert the figment of a tactual apostolic succession as the basis of diocesan prelacy. The Waldenses, in their native fastnesses, were crowded back to anti-Nicene times, in the ardor of some writers to sustain by so-called history the Presbyterial organization of the early church, and too much, perhaps, has been made of the interesting history of the Culdees, in the same interest. But this partisan or strictly polemic temper does despite to the fair spirit of impartial history. There are no worthy or enduring lessons to be learned from his-

toric assumptions. That which did not happen is not worthy, in a historical sense, of a student's consideration. "It ought to have happened," argues one, and therefore "I will proceed as if it did happen," is unworthy of the earnest man seeking for the facts. The facts are what the science of history has been deputed to obtain, if obtainable; if not, to search still further, and wait until found. Exact impartiality should be the regulative law of the historian's very being. He must not strain the facts in order to the support of any prepossession. He did not make the history of the past. He cannot unmake it. He must form its acquaintance before he dares to draw his inferences. He must learn it before he attempts to teach its lessons. For this the historic temper is an eminent necessity. That calm, cool, even for the moment, dispassionate frame, which is alert to all the evidence; which weighs and balances with the utmost pleasure; which is not agitated and alarmed when some favorite theory seems to be impugned; which does not discredit a witness simply because he makes statements contrary to what we think he ought to make; which searches for the real occurrence, the actual event, as the best trained scientist examines the earth's strata; which is in love with the positive truth of events as a natural philosopher is in love with the positive truth in nature, or a reverent Christian is in love with the absolute truth of Holy Scripture.

History, as has been properly said, is the science of events, as archæology is the science of usages, zoology the science of animal life, and geology the science of the earth's formation, and we must have the true historic temper, if we should raise our study to the dignity of a respected science. Historical criticism as a science is just this: a painstaking effort, with the assistance of all proper apparatus, to cut away the accretions which have gathered around the events of the past, such as the deposits of ignorance, superstition, bigotry, party spirit, and insufficient inquiry, and then the presentation of the facts, clean cut, precise, and, in the first instance, bald, if you please.

But, you inquire, does the historian need no imagination, no sympathy, no warmth, no representative capacity? Yes, in abund-

ance, when he has found what has happened, and how it happened, by what principles it took place, and under what surroundings it worked its course, what persons gave it expression, and what lasting results it produced. He wants then to make the actors to speak again the burning words which really fell from their lips, and to portray the scene until it is present once more to the mind, as an all but living, breathing picture.

We need the historic method.—See Hatch.

The church is a living organism, unfolding itself by and among men. Great principles have vitalized its life, directed its energies, supplied its motive force, and formulated its utterances. These principles have risen to a dominating control one after another, have swayed the life of the church and marked out its course. The action of a regulative principle from its rise to its decline, *i. e.*, from the time when it became influential until it gave way to some new principle called for by the changed circumstances, constitutes what has been called an epoch, and under the conduct of a true philosophical spirit, we can trace the course of history by these definite epochs. We must not simply string facts together in a long, unsuggestive, inarticulate, unmeaning row, jostling each other but never connecting, gathered up but never vitalized, and therefore never producing anything, never accounting for anything. This is simply a weariness to the flesh, an unsupportable tax to the memory, and a fatal opiate for the historic disposition. But guided by a true historic method, we must note the regulative, producing principles, watch their action, see their progress in the midst of error and superstition, and seize them when they culminate into definite, well recognized and easily understood results. We must make our induction of facts as complete as possible, then our generalization broad but faithful, and, behold, history will be disentangled, as we follow the movement of its ascertained epochs. We will recognize thus the doctrines which governed her true spiritual growth, we will see the moral life which flowered out into captivating beauty, we will rightly estimate the evils which deformed her character and retarded her progress, we will rejoice in her charities, and pity, if not despise, her corruptions and en-

mities. We will see what is worn out in her usages, and what has survived only to show new vigor with increasing years. We will see the sources of her strength as well as the causes of her weakness. We will come to understand her divine mission for all earthly ages in this spirit and manner as well as in its true intent, and we will seize her instruments of victory into hands made ready for their handling by the enlarged wisdom resulting from our study. And we will have the literature of the whole subject if we are faithful. That is, we will know these came about, what discussions settled the various doctrines, who conducted these discussions, what great principles have accomplished in the past, and what they may be expected to accomplish in the future. In other words, we will get authority for the views and positions, which prudence leads us to hold and maintain in our active life.

There is a great fascination about the study of church history, at whatever stage of its movement, whether in the humble beginning, or in the slow, tedious advances, or in its tremendous victory over all rivals, or in its unseemly controversies, its shameful comminglings with the world; whether in its lonely adventures in the fastnesses of the mountains, or in its playing at universal monarchy on the deserted throne of the Cæsars; whether in the one department or the other, of missions, of worship, of government, of doctrines, of morals and manners. Wherever the movement leads us we are fascinated, because we know that we are following the track of an organism, whose pulse is quickened from above, which carries in its upward and onward struggle the best hopes of the human family, which is indestructible, and has emblazoned upon its banners victory over every foe. I am not astonished at the weariness which sometimes overtakes the diligent student as he traces the confused steps of the great world powers through their interminable complications; for he reads with the oppression upon his heart that comes from the ever-present thought that these were vain. They have come and gone. Mildew and blight settles on the page which narrates their story, midway at its most brilliant career, for as thought sweeps ahead toward the end the student exclaims, Wherefore? To what end? They have perished.

The memorials of their greatness are few and doubtful. The lustre of their action has been dimmed by the breath of decay, and the mold of death is already gathered upon their memory. But with the kingdom of God, whose eventful history we are to trace, it is different. The power of an endless life breathes and moves and speaks at every turn of its tremendous career. The light that shines from its fair vision is to grow brighter unto the perfect day. The principles for which it contends are quick with eternal vigor. They belong to the everlasting economy of the divine. They are making for a righteousness that shall stand unflanked and unchallenged in the awful place where the Most Holy keeps his seal, and they are entering into the disordered, dismantled generations as the dominant factors, which are to regenerate and reshape the thought and speech and action of human society until it is brought into line with the fixed thought of God.

The principles which we are to examine as the very central mass of our study have come into our world to stay until the grand consummation of all things, and then to reappear upon a nobler scene, with a wider and bolder application, when the episode of human life is over, and the generations of the redeemed have been delivered up on the Lamb's Book of Life to the Father.

The heroes who adorn and enrich the annals of our kingdom, and who fought its peerless battles, will not only appear from age to age as leaders in the dauntless strife, but as our brothers whose devotion we are to drink in, whose self-denial we are to imitate, whose boldness in the faith must animate our faltering courage, whose happiness we are to share, and whose death-song, issuing from many a burning pile, we are to catch up and send, even in clearer notes, along the corridors of incoming time. Yea, the fascination of our study comes from the fact that the deathless kingdom, whose movement we are to follow, is our kingdom. We are a part of it—its principles are our principles, its heroes our kinsmen, its aims our aims, its chief our Lord and Christ, and its sure result our dominion, for by the force of a divine life, throbbing in its veins, and under the sweep of a divine decree, long since declared, she must go on conquering and to conquer until the whole

world shall bow to the peaceful sceptre of the cross. We read the history of a continuous kingdom, which knows no end.

May we not with some degree of confidence challenge the interest of students for this important department of theological science?

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